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Lyam Thomas Christopher

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# The Secret Fire of the Ancients

## How to Stay in the Fasted State...Indefinitely



Our bodies are trying to tell us something. Throughout the world, mankind has a persistent memory of a lost golden age, a time when conditions were far better for us than they are today. In Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, this fantasy comes down to us as the myth of Eden. In Tibetan Buddhism and Hindu traditions it is commemorated as Shambhala. Supposedly, the people who lived during this golden time had knowledge of a mysterious power, known in medieval alchemy as “the Secret Fire.”

The stories may be true. Or at least they are echos of the truth. We may have actually enjoyed such an age of paradise, a time when we took spiritual knowledge for granted and enjoyed a deeper connection to the Earth. Our bodies appear to remember it. In fact, I propose that our bodies crave it and seek to restore us back to Eden, even though we have failed to heed the deeper needs of our own physiology for thousands of years now.

The idea that enlightenment can be achieved through physical effort may sound preposterous to those who believe in civilization's ideal of "mind over matter." Or in an abstract, otherworldly God. But the physical methodologies of mysticism are what *Forbidden Realms* is all about. The premise here is that if you provide your body with the right conditions, the mind will be able to find its way back to paradise. In other words, the right physical conditions can rekindle the Secret Fire.

*"...the Secret Fire was more than a substance, more than a secret which could be communicated 'in syllables.' It is not a piece of information; nor is it a code to cracked or a riddle to be solved. Nor, alas, is it a system of philosophy or body of knowledge which can be expressed directly."*

— Patrick Harpur, *The Philosopher's Secret Fire*

In the previously-published [article](#), I tell a story that might explain how mankind lost its prehistoric Eden, if indeed such a state of being ever existed. I also reveal that there are methods today that are a continuation of a secret tradition that both commemorates our long-lost paradise *and* attempts to restore it to us.

Magic, shamanism, meditation, breath work, fasting — these practices form the forgotten roots of religion, yes. However, in their original forms, they were not religious at all. They had nothing to do with being a "good person," or with creating a future utopia to elevate mankind into some kind of heavenly Jerusalem. Quite the reverse. They were a series of practices that attempted to restore us to the past — to an older, deeper, more primal state of consciousness. To the "original mind," as Zen Buddhists sometimes call it. Fasting is just one of these disciplines. One among many. And fasting is exceptionally effective at bringing us a glimpse of Eden. It can do this because it re-activates something we have lost: the Secret Fire.

## But Fasting is Difficult

Fasting puts a strain on the body. Each time a mystic begins a fast, he must spend two or three days adapting. He or she goes through a period of stress, and this stress is not necessarily good for the body.

Once the adaptation period ends, however, the hunger goes away, and a great feeling of peace descends. As tradition would have it, a human being can live quite a long time in a fasted state — that is, if there is a continuous source of clean, natural water available to drink. Jesus supposedly fasted for forty days, and as modern mystics have repeatedly shown, this was not really so super-human a feat.

Yes, fasting is enjoyable! It makes you feel really good. If you don't agree, it simply means you haven't achieved a fasted state yet. Most people associate “not eating” with gut-wrenching hunger and low energy. This is because their bodies have so thoroughly adapted to our modern agricultural diet — based primarily on grains, sugars, and starches — that they are no longer capable of entering a fasted state even after sleeping all night without food. A body that becomes addicted to a constant influx of carbohydrate-rich foods learns to burn only glucose for fuel, and it forgets how to exist in its natural, pre-civilized state as a fat-burning organism.

## Fat to the Rescue

Sorry, vegans. Our “Adam and Eve” ancestors were not vegetarians. Paleolithic humans ate animal fat, and lots of it. We have evolved from meat eaters, and we owe our large brains to the fact that our predecessors ate a lot of nutrient-dense meats. Especially the fatty parts of the animal. The brain is made up of mostly fat and cholesterol, and contrary to what most doctors still think, the brain does much better at burning fat for fuel than sugar.

Since the advent of civilized agriculture and our grain-based, carbohydrate-rich diet, the human brain has gradually been shrinking in size. And it has not been functioning optimally either — that is, if today's rampant anxiety, depression, heartless business practices, fundamentalist religions, and wars are any indication. We consider these horrors of civilization to be normal (if not troublesome) parts of our human nature. I propose that *they are not normal at all*. They, in fact, result from our loss of the Secret Fire. The true norm for humanity is an awakened mind and heart, and there is a way

for us to get back to our primal, original mind. Restore the Secret Fire and you restore paradise.



Why is fasting difficult? Fasting causes the body to use up its stored sugar (glycogen) within a matter of hours. The body then sort of freaks out and begins to digest its own muscle and skin to create more sugar (glucose) for fuel. So addicted has it become to a sugar-based diet that it refuses to trust that we would actually consume anything else. However, after several days, it thankfully starts to remember. It stops destroying itself and begins burning its stored fat for energy. This reversion to our primal physiology brings about a gradual transformation that is physical, mental, emotional, and yes, spiritual.

### **The Cause of Our Modern Decrepitude**

Our standard Western agricultural diet of grains and other carbohydrates is unnatural. Since carbohydrates turn almost immediately into sugar (glucose), the modern diet forces the body to constantly use sugar for fuel. *Sugar is a toxic fuel source* when it is prolonged in the diet. The ravages of aging, which everyone in this day and age seems to think of as normal, actually result from a carbohydrate-dependent metabolism. In sugar metabolism, a process known as glycation destroys skin cells and other connective tissues, causing wrinkling and sagging. Nerve cells also suffer. Glycation inhibits the higher brain functions and leads to Alzheimer's and other degenerative nerve conditions such as multiple sclerosis. Burning sugar for fuel also leads to cancer, the chronic disease of civilization that is rapidly on its way to becoming the number-one cause of death in the modern world.

The extensive bodily damage that results from poor eating is terrible enough, but it is mainly the *mind*-destroying effects of starchy, sugary foods that led mystics to develop the discipline of fasting. Fasting gets your brain off of sugar and switches it back to its natural state, into fat-burning mode. When the body is forced to use its own fat reserves, those healthy fats restore it back to a cleaner form of energy production, gradually healing it from years of sugar damage. The corresponding restoration of primal consciousness that accompanies a restored brain can be, in a word, *glorious!*

### **Is Fasting Really the Answer?**

But then, of course, comes the problem. Fasting is unsustainable. As far as we ordinary mortals know, a human body cannot survive indefinitely without food. You eventually have to go back to eating, and as a result, the supreme calm and clarity of the primal mind will once again cloud over. The Secret Fire will go out.

Or will it?

Here's where most of the ancient mystics got it wrong. They noticed that going without food seems to bring us back to the true, serene nature of the mind, so they naturally assumed that abstaining from all food was necessary. But if the damaging effects of food actually come from our consumption of grains, sugars, and starches, then there should actually be no need to abstain from all edible substances altogether. Just certain kinds. There must be a sustainable way of eating that simply avoids the foods that destroy the brain.

Is there a healthy diet that can keep us in a permanently fasted state? As I mentioned in the last article, the answer is yes.

### **The Ketogenic Diet**

There are many benefits to the ketogenic diet. One of the most annoying ones, to me, is weight loss. I say that because humans wouldn't even be obese to begin with if it weren't for the carbohydrate-smothered diet of our agricultural civilization. Our culture's endless obsession with losing weight, our tortuous hours of cardio at the gym, the shame we feel when we look in the mirror, the pointless awareness campaigns to make people of size feel accepted—all of this fuss is needless. It is simply a result of an obesity epidemic created by an ever-increasing addiction to carbohydrates.

It's simple, really:

1. Consuming carbohydrates causes blood sugar to rise.
2. The pancreas produces insulin to protect the body from a sugar overdose. Insulin happens to be an anabolic hormone (it causes the body to grow).
3. Therefore, we grow (That is, we get fat).

The more carbs you eat, the fatter you get. Simply removing almost all carbs from the diet has some astonishing effects on the body and mind, the least important of which is the normalization of body weight:

1. **Peace of Mind:** Fat metabolism increases production of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) in the brain, which calms the nerves. The ketogenic diet is so good at

calming the brain that it is even an effective treatment for epilepsy.

2. **Mental Clarity:** With calm comes serenity. Clear perception. Seeing the world more as it is, instead of as the stress response would have us see it. A sugar-overloaded body that secretes a lot of insulin attempts to balance out the anabolic effects of that hormone by secreting stress hormones: cortisol and adrenaline. Yes, carbohydrates not only cause hyperactivity and sugar crashes, but also needless stress.
3. **Anti-Aging:** A body that doesn't use sugar as its primary fuel source will experience very little glycation damage. And a body that doesn't get routinely pressured to digest its own skin and muscle to make fuel will naturally maintain itself in a more pleasing shape.
4. **Reduced Inflammation:** Healthy fats such as omega 3s are naturally anti-inflammatory. That and a dramatic reduction in the gunky byproducts of sugar metabolism make your body less irritated by its own waste products.
5. **Enhanced Immunity:** A body that experiences less stress allocates its energy reserves less toward fight-or-flight situations and more toward healing and fending off disease.
6. **Virtual Immunity to Chronic Diseases:** Most of the chronic conditions — sometimes referred to as the diseases of civilization — result from metabolic syndrome, a generalized condition caused primarily by a sugar-addicted lifestyle. Medical doctors are still loathe to admit that metabolic syndrome is the result of carb addiction. Most of them are, of course, carb-addicted.
7. **Optimal Hormone Production:** Hormones are made from fat and cholesterol. Consuming healthy fats gives the body what it needs to function healthily.
8. **Muscle Building:** This happens because of the “protein-sparing effect” of the ketogenic diet. Since a fat-burning body no longer experiences sugar-crashes, it no longer gets pressured to digest its own muscle to produce sugar for fuel. Working out in a gym can, therefore, produce impressive and sustainable muscle gains.
9. **Weight Optimization:** Less insulin production means less fat-building. Visceral fat rapidly disappears, and a healthy layer of subcutaneous fat accumulates, giving the

skin a healthy, baby-like glow.

“Ketogenic” literally means “generating ketones.” A high-fat, low carbohydrate diet causes the liver to turn fat into special molecules called ketones, which the brain then burns in a manner that’s far cleaner than its former consumption of glucose. The fat-burning state, in which the body switches from burning sugar to burning ketones, is called “nutritional ketosis.” This is the state our prehistoric ancestors were in, most of the time. It is the secret to paradise. And yes, you guessed it. The Secret Fire is none other than our fat-burning metabolism reborn. Our primal metabolism and our primal nervous system restored to full health.

The ketogenic diet is similar to the Paleo diet in that it attempts to mimic what our Paleolithic ancestors ate. But the Paleo plan doesn’t go far enough. It attempts to eat more naturally, yes, but it doesn’t take into account that many fruits and vegetables have been bred by humans for thousands of years to be sweeter and sweeter. A diet that truly mimics that of our ancestors would also take into account that our ancestors ate very little sweet fruit at all, if indeed any! Such foods barely existed before agriculture, or when they did, it was only as bitter berries or wild apples that ripened for a mere three weeks out of the year.

The ketogenic diet is a smarter form of Paleo because it targets the macronutrients fat and protein as food. Most importantly, it avoids carbohydrates. People in ketosis don’t necessarily eat “Paleo-approved” foods. They simply eat foods that mimic the macronutrients of our Paleolithic ancestors. While a Paleo person would avoid butter and cheese (because our caveman ancestors didn’t live on farms), a keto person might include those items because they have relatively healthy fat profiles that at least mimic the nutrition of our ancestors.

Ketogenic Diet vs. Low Carb Diet: Thomas DeLauer





People who live the ketogenic lifestyle tend to say that the diet is easy, but those who have failed to enter a state of ketosis will often tell you that it is too complicated. The complexity of adapting to the fat-burning mode is quite real. People who attempt to switch to the diet often do so because they have already developed the chronic health problems of civilization's carb-based diet. By the time those health problems have crept over them, these people have already been in a continuous sugar-burning mode for several decades, and their bodies have simply surrendered to the sugar deluge. Their bodies, therefore are too habituated and have trouble making the switch. This usually means that the older you are, the more difficult it will be to adapt. This is where some of the complications occur. Once you *are* adapted, however, sugar-cravings vanish, the food choices are simple and wholesome, and the diet is easy to maintain.

### How to Do It

The principle is simple. Eat very few carbs and eat *a lot* of healthy fat. *A lot*. A moderately active man or woman who is attempting to reach a state of nutritional ketosis should consume the following approximate amounts of macronutrients per day:

- Healthy fats: 200 grams
- Protein: 100 grams
- Net carbohydrates: less than 20 grams

Healthy fat should consist mostly of saturated fats (lard, beef tallow, duck fat, grass-fed butter, and coconut oil), mono-unsaturated fats (olive oil and avocados), and omega 3 fatty acids (found in fish oil). Healthy fat does *not* include canola oil (poison!), polyunsaturated fats, or the really nasty trans fats (found in deep-fried foods).

Net carbohydrates are easy to calculate: Simply subtract the grams of fiber from the grams of total carbs. Fiber is not a form of carbohydrate that converts to sugar, so you don't have to count it.

The keto person should also avoid foods that spike the blood sugar, such as carrots and onions (other than scallions or green onions). These vegetables, despite the fact that they are not extremely sweet, have a high glycemic index. They convert quickly to sugar in your body and force you back into sugar-burning mode. It only takes a small spike in blood sugar to kick your body out of ketosis. Coffee (caffeine) can also spike blood sugar. However, most people are able to enter ketosis and still drink a small amount of coffee or black tea per day.

Women should be extra careful to keep their fat intake high. Keto makes the body lose fat quickly and easily, but it is important for women to keep their body-fat percentage above 10% for proper reproductive health. Men can actually drop a little lower than 10% and still remain healthy.

### **What Foods Can I Eat?**

If you are over 30 years old, I don't recommend going cold turkey on carbs. It might be better to try a Paleo diet for a while, gradually reducing fruit consumption each day. In addition to Paleo foods, you can eat grass-fed butter to supplement your body with fat, getting it used to higher and higher levels of fat in your daily food intake.

Eventually, you will be able to make the switch to keto. However, you will still very likely find the transition a challenge. When you start a ketogenic diet, the body stresses out. It seems to nag you each hour, saying "This isn't going to work. You're going to die!" You will feel hunger like a black hole, and you will lose a lot of water as your body uses up its remaining glycogen. Stay hydrated. You will also likely develop a nasty headache and possible dizziness because your electrolytes are off balance. It's helpful to have a magnesium supplement handy (magnesium taurate or magnesium threonate are best). Weirder still, you will find yourself coming up with the most bizarre rationalizations for eating carby foods. Persevere, however, and you will eventually enter ketosis.

**Following are common American staples that are appropriate while attempting to enter ketosis:** all meats, poultry, fish, leafy greens (but go light on kale), broccoli,

cauliflower, green beans, cheese (soft, mild varieties), eggs, avocados, lemons (and pure lemon juice), herbal tea, coconut oil, olive oil, lard, beef tallow, duck fat, butter (preferably from grass-fed cows)

**The following foods can be incorporated *sparingly*:** coffee (no sugar, of course), black tea, tomatoes, scallions, kale, zucchini, and herbs as seasoning.

If there's something besides these foods that you'd like to add to your diet, simply search for it in Google with the word "nutrition" added to your query. You can then check net carbs and total fat. Remember to keep daily net carbs as low as possible. Keep healthy fats as high as possible. Once you've been in ketosis for two months, you can increase your carbs up to 30 or so grams per day if you like. You can start exploring your tolerance level.

Salt is perfectly fine, unless you have a medical condition that prohibits too much. In fact, you will need a little more salt, not mention magnesium and potassium, than people who eat industrial foods. The "dirty" kinds of salt are recommended. The kinds with trace minerals in them, mined from the Earth. Himalayan salt or Celtic salt is good.

If you don't eat organic, grass-fed meat, I suggest you supplement with vitamin K2. K2 keeps calcium in your bones and out of your soft tissues. Factory-farmed meat is deficient in this vitamin, and if you don't get *healthy* fat from animals, you will still be at risk for tartar on the teeth, kidney stones, heart disease, Alzheimer's, etc.. The ketogenic diet won't be able to protect you from these things unless your calcium is ending up in the right places!

One more thing. Many people who begin a ketogenic lifestyle will not develop the prehistoric appetite which appreciates the healthiest, fattiest, and bloodiest parts of animals. Namely, the organ meats. And since grains are off limits, you might not be getting enough of a very little-known vitamin: vitamin B15, also called pangamic acid. B15 is banned as a supplement in the U.S., and unfortunately, if you don't get enough of it, your heart health can decline. There are a couple of unusual sources you can turn to in foods: nutritional yeast and sunflower seeds, both of which make a great seasoning on your cooking. A spoonful of nutritional yeast per day will give you enough B15 (and other B vitamins) to keep your heart strong.

What about the Secret Fire?

Those of you who know something of alchemy might be fussing about my likening of a

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off, thanks to our culture’s belief in “mind over matter.” I will be discussing the connection of metabolism to “mystical powers” in future articles. Stay tuned!



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